

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congressman Charlie Wilson (OH-6) voted in support of action that should bring some relief at the pump for working families and small businesses. The House passed the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) Fill Suspension and Consumer Protection Act (HR 6022). The measure temporarily suspends the filling of the SPR through the end of 2008, as long as the price of crude oil remains above \$75 per barrel.

“The SPR is currently approximately 97-percent full,” Wilson said. “That’s the highest it’s ever been and is more than enough to meet any national security needs.”

The price of gas in Ohio has skyrocketed 130-percent since 2001. “That’s squeezing working families, small businesses and our entire economy,” Wilson said. “That’s a trend that’s clearly unsustainable.”

Filling the SPR takes 70,000 barrels of oil off the market each day and a temporary suspension could reduce gas prices by 5 to 24 cents per gallon. “We know we need to do more, but it’s a critical first step,” Wilson said.

House Democrats have repeatedly called for the President to halt the government acquisition of oil for the SPR. Since March, Congressman Wilson has sent two letters to President Bush asking him to do so. By law the President has the authority to suspend filling the SPR. But as late as last week he said he wasn’t persuaded.

The SPR has been tapped or suspended before by President Bush, President Clinton and the first President Bush. Today the U.S. Senate passed a similar provision. The House bill and the Senate bill now need to be merged in a conference committee.